

In the Claims:

Claims 1, 11 and 22 have been amended as shown on the attached claims and all the other claims are as originally filed.

What is claimed is:

1. (Amended) A decorative cover for supporting leaves and petioles of a plant having substantial horizontal growth so as to prevent damage thereto, the decorative cover comprising:

a base having a closed lower end, an open upper end, an outer peripheral surface, an object retaining space and a horizontal axis; and

a decorative border having an upper end, a lower end and a length, the lower end of the decorative border connected to the open upper end of the base and extending from the open upper end of the base so as to be disposed at an upward and outward angle with respect to the open upper end of the base, the decorative border having a curvilinear, undulating configuration which permits the decorative border to hold, support and cushion individual leaves and petioles of a plant when the plant is disposed in the object retaining space of the base of the decorative cover and the leaves and petioles are positioned on the decorative border, wherein when the leaves and petioles of the plant are positioned on the decorative border, the

length of the decorative border is greater than a length of at least a portion of the leaves and petioles of the plant and the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base decreases ~~so that~~ due to the weight of the leaves and petioles of the plant positioned thereon whereby the decorative border moves toward a compressed condition, thereby permitting the decorative border to resiliently hold and gently support the individual leaves and petioles of the plant to prevent damage thereto and to accommodate horizontal growth of the leaves and petioles of the plant.

2. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 1 wherein the decorative cover is constructed of at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material, and wherein the decorative cover is flexible, resilient and shape-sustaining such that the decorative cover may be substantially flattened and unflattened.

3. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 2 wherein the sheet of material is selected from the group consisting of paper, polymeric film, foil, metallized film, fabric, fiber, burlap and combinations thereof.

4. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 2 wherein the sheet of material is provided with a characteristic selected from the group consisting of designs, decorative patterns, colorings, coatings, embossings, flockings, metallic finishes, pearlescent finishes, translucent finishes, transparent finishes, iridescent finishes, neon finishes, holographic finishes or designs, opaque finishes, clear finishes and combinations thereof.

5. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 1 wherein the decorative cover is provided with a plurality of bondingly connected overlapping folds formed in at least a portion of the base of the decorative cover which cooperate to retain the decorative cover in a formed shape.

6. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 1 wherein the decorative cover is constructed from a sheet of material having a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 mil to about 30 mil.

7. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 1 wherein the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as a gesneriad.

8. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 7 wherein the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as an African violet.

9. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 1 wherein the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is at least about 40°.

10. (Original) The decorative cover of claim 9 wherein the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is in a range of from about 40° to about 55°.

11. (Amended) A decorative assembly, comprising:

a plant having substantial horizontal growth, the plant having leaves and petioles; and

a decorative cover for supporting leaves and petioles of a plant having substantial horizontal growth so as to prevent damage thereto, the decorative cover comprising:

a base having a closed lower end, an open upper end, an outer peripheral surface, an object retaining space and a horizontal axis; and

a decorative border having an upper end, a lower end and a length, the lower end of the decorative border connected to the open upper end of the base and extending from the open upper end of the base so as to be disposed at an upward and

outward angle with respect to the open upper end of the base, the decorative border having a curvilinear, undulating configuration which permits the decorative border to hold, support and cushion individual leaves and petioles of a the plant when the plant is disposed in the object retaining space of the base of the decorative cover and the leaves and petioles are positioned on the decorative border, ~~wherein~~ ~~when the leaves and petioles of the plant are positioned on the decorative border,~~ the length of the decorative border is being greater than a length of at least a portion of the leaves and petioles of the plant supported on the decorative border and the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base ~~decreases~~ ing so that ~~when the~~ leaves and petioles of the plant are positioned thereon whereby the decorative border moves toward a compressed condition, ~~thereby permitting~~ so that the decorative border ~~to resiliently holds~~ and gently supports the individual leaves and petioles of the plant to prevent damage thereto and to accommodate horizontal growth of the leaves and petioles of the plant.

12. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein the decorative cover is constructed of at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material, and wherein the decorative cover is flexible, resilient and shape-sustaining such that the decorative cover may be substantially flattened and unflattened.

13. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 12 wherein the sheet of material from which the decorative cover is constructed is selected from the group consisting of paper, polymeric film, foil, metallized film, fabric, fiber, burlap and combinations thereof.

14. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 12 wherein the sheet of material from which the decorative cover is constructed is provided with a characteristic selected from the group consisting of designs, decorative patterns, colorings, coatings, embossings, flockings, metallic finishes, pearlescent finishes, translucent finishes, transparent finishes, iridescent finishes, neon finishes, holographic finishes or designs, opaque finishes, clear finishes and combinations thereof.

15. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein the decorative cover is provided with a plurality of bondingly connected overlapping folds

formed in at least a portion of the base of the decorative cover which cooperate to retain the decorative cover in a formed shape.

16. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein the decorative cover is constructed from a sheet of material having a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 mil to about 30 mil.

17. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as a gesneriad.

18. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 17 wherein the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as an African violet.

19. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein the angle of the decorative border of the decorative cover relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is at least about 40°.

20. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 19 wherein the angle of the decorative border of the decorative cover relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is in a range of from about 40° to about 55°.

21. (Original) The decorative assembly of claim 11 wherein, when the plant is disposed in the object retaining space of the base of the decorative cover and the leaves and petioles of the plant are positioned on the decorative border of the decorative cover, the decorative border is in a compressed condition wherein the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base is in a range of from about 25° to about 40°.

22. (Amended) A method of using a decorative cover with a plant having substantial horizontal growth, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a plant having substantial horizontal growth, the plant having leaves and petioles, the plant contained within a flower pot having an outer peripheral surface;

forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover which is flexible, resilient and substantially shape-sustaining, the decorative cover comprising:

a base having a closed lower end, an open upper end, an outer peripheral surface, an object retaining space and a horizontal axis; and

a decorative border having an upper end, a lower end and a length, the lower end of the decorative border connected to the open upper end of the base and extending from the open upper



end of the base so as to be disposed at an upward and outward angle with respect to the open upper end of the base, the decorative border having a curvilinear, undulating configuration which permits the decorative border to hold, support and cushion individual leaves and petioles of a plant when the plant is disposed in the object retaining space of the base of the decorative cover and the leaves and petioles are positioned on the decorative border, ~~and wherein the decorative border having a length of the decorative border is~~ greater than a length of at least a portion of the leaves and petioles of the plant supported on the decorative border;

disposing the flower pot containing the plant having substantial horizontal growth into the object retaining space of the base of the decorative cover, the base of the decorative cover substantially surrounding and encompassing the outer peripheral surface of the flower pot; and

positioning and arranging the leaves and petioles of the plant on the decorative border such that the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base decreases ~~so that the decorative border~~ and moves toward a compressed condition due to the weight of the leaves and petioles of the plant, thereby

~~permitting~~ whereby the decorative border ~~to~~ resiliently holds and gently supports the individual leaves and petioles of the plant to prevent damage thereto and to accommodate horizontal growth of the leaves and petioles of the plant.

23. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the decorative cover may be substantially flattened and unflattened.

24. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the decorative cover is provided with a plurality of bondingly connected overlapping folds formed in at least a portion of the base of the decorative cover which cooperate to retain the decorative cover in a formed shape.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the sheet of material is selected from the group consisting of paper, polymeric film, foil, metallized film, fabric, fiber, burlap and combinations thereof.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the sheet of material is provided with a characteristic selected from the group consisting of designs, decorative patterns, colorings, coatings, embossings, flockings, metallic finishes, pearlescent finishes, translucent finishes, transparent finishes, iridescent finishes, neon finishes, holographic finishes or designs, opaque finishes, clear finishes and combinations thereof.

27. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the sheet of material has a thickness in a range of from about 0.1 mil to about 30 mil.

28. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of providing a plant having substantial horizontal growth, the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as a gesneriad.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28 wherein the plant having substantial horizontal growth is further defined as an African violet.

30. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the angle of the decorative border of the decorative cover relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is at least about 40°.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30 wherein, in the step of forming at least one sheet of flexible, non-shape sustaining material into a decorative cover, the angle of the decorative border of the decorative cover relative to the horizontal axis of the base of the decorative cover is in a range of from about 40° to about 55°.

32. (Original) The method of claim 22 wherein, in the step of positioning and arranging the leaves and petioles of the plant on the decorative border such that the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base decreases so that the decorative border moves toward a compressed condition, the angle of the decorative border relative to the horizontal axis of the base is in a range of from about 25° to about 40°.